



A large, dark blue number "5" with a white outline is positioned on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the landscape image and the grey text area.

YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

fiscal years

2015–2019

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Des Moines, Iowa

MESSAGE FROM STATE CONSERVATIONIST JAY MAR

Greetings,

I'm pleased to share Iowa NRCS' strategic plan for fiscal years 2015 to 2019. This document outlines our Agency's mission and vision, shares our core values and provides a course for the next five years of serving Iowa's farmers and landowners. The Iowa NRCS leadership team of Principal Staff and Line Officers worked for several months to develop a clear, workable plan that allows our agency to refocus on our core purpose: providing science-based technical assistance through comprehensive conservation planning.

The plan targets three priorities.

1. Provide high quality conservation planning and technical assistance that effectively addresses resource concerns.

This is a key to our overall success. We need to make sure all planners are certified; ensure focused attention on science-based conservation planning; provide the necessary tools and skills; and make sure our employees, partners and producers understand the basics and benefits of conservation planning.

2. Optimize NRCS financial human and capital resources.

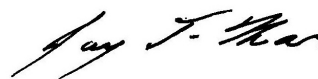
We need to continue to be wise stewards of the tax dollars we receive to do our work; ensure we provide the right tools and equipment for our staff to do the job and distribute our

resources where they are needed the most; and manage staffing resources to emphasize the conservation planning process.

3. Accelerate conservation implementation.

We need to create more mutually beneficial partnerships and alliances to make this happen. We need to sell conservation's link to profit and production with the help of agribusiness and again focus on field office resources to provide what they need to help make this happen.

This strategic plan will serve as our compass as we develop specific tactics to achieve each individual objective. We will rely on our staff, partners and producers to see our vision become a reality. I hope that you will join NRCS in our effort to provide future Iowans a sustainable and productive soil and water resource that supports the environmental and economic health of our state, nation and world.



Jay T. Mar

State Conservationist

Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service



mission

Helping producers through science-based technical expertise to conserve Iowa's natural resources which results in healthy and productive landscapes for the public good.

vision

Recognized as the premiere technical conservation agency;

- Accelerating conservation implementation through quality conservation planning,
- With a high performing workforce, and partners.



core values

Service – NRCS is committed to providing the highest level of customer service.

Employee Technical Expertise – NRCS scientists and subject matter experts develop and deliver science-based conservation assistance and solutions

Relationships / Partnerships – Effective conservation requires collaboration between agencies, organizations, and individuals across Iowa and the nation. NRCS utilizes a locally-led, cooperative process with partners to ensure the best conservation of natural resources.

Valued and Productive Workforce – NRCS is the employer of choice, providing tools for employees to achieve results, valuing diversity and offering training, opportunities for growth and a safe, healthy work environment.

Integrity / Trust – NRCS employees are accountable for our actions, dealing with all customers in a fair, consistent, and impartial manner while safeguarding the public trust.

Commitment to Conservation – NRCS is committed to delivering conservation services in a manner that provides for the most positive impact to the natural resources.

Ethic of Excellence – NRCS employees are known for their passion and commitment to conservation in all they do, making NRCS the “go to” agency for sound, voluntary conservation assistance.

strategic goal *one*:

Provide high quality conservation planning and technical assistance that effectively addresses resource concerns.

objective

1.1

Ensure that all planners are certified planners.

- Identify core competencies necessary to be a certified planner
- Inventory employee core competencies
- Develop training curriculum
- Deliver training
- Update policy
- Provide tracking system

objective

1.2

Ensure focused attention on conservation planning.

- Messaging planning priority
- Determine resource / time needs
- Focus resources and remove obstacles to planning
- Develop and implement performance standards awards system

objective

1.3

Provide necessary tools and skills to efficiently and effectively complete conservation planning.

- Inventory needs
- Identify commercial off the shelf (COTS) tools available
- Portability of tools
- Work with the national tool developers
- Training on the use of the tools

objective

1.4

Market the basics and benefits of conservation planning to employees, producers, and partners.

- Develop marketing campaign
- Lead with influential producers
- Sell conservation
- Complete marketing blitz

strategic goal *two* :

Optimize NRCS financial, human, and capital resources.

objective

2.1

Continue to improve fiscal resource management.

- Identify potential improvement projects (Define)
- Identify current state (Measure)
- Identify root causes for deficiencies (Analyze)
- Identify solutions and implement (Improve)
- Follow-up and tracking actions (Control)
- Complete implementation of direct charge and Document Management System

objective

2.2

Ensure tools, equipment, and property are correct for the job and distributed based on staffing need.

- Improve the use of the Tools and Technology Committee
- Evaluate Shared Management concept
- Provide ongoing training and support for the current tools
- Evaluate / inventory current tools for effectiveness (i.e., computers and vehicles)
- Evaluate and improve workload analysis tool

objective

2.3

Manage staffing resources to emphasize the conservation planning process.

- Clearly define roles
- Develop conservation support action plan
- Improve training
- Improve support of field offices

strategic goal *three*:

Accelerate conservation implementation.

objective

3.1

Create mutually beneficial alliances.

- Identify potential groups
- Identify what we need
- Develop standard agreement language
- Develop and work with alliances

objective

3.2

Ensure equitable sharing of resources between NRCS and our partners.

- Assess current partner agreements
- Identify what to share (if needed)
- Create / refine current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) documents

objective

3.3

Sell conservation's link to profit & production.


- Public relations effort focused on economics
- Develop tools
- Train staff
- Engage agribusiness

objective

3.4

Optimize Field Offices resources to accelerate conservation implementation.

- Evaluate the proper make-up of field office staffs
- Identify barriers to implementation
- Schedule and prioritize work
- Engage contractors
- Continue technical training



“Out of the long list of nature’s gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil.”

Hugh Hammond Bennett, First NRCS Chief



To learn more about NRCS,
visit our website at:

www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov

*Helping People Help the Land
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

